

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 6-15, 18 and 19 are pending in this application. Claims 11-15 are allowed. By this Amendment, claims 9, 15 and 18 are amended for clarity only. The specification also is amended to include reference to Fig. 7 which was added in the previous Amendment. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution and only clarify recited features; and (c) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is respectfully requested.

I. Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 11-15 are allowed. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 3, 6-10, 18 and 19 are allowable for the reasons set forth below.

II. Rejection of Claims 18 and 19

The Office Action rejects claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Kawano et al. (Kawano), JP-A-2000-318904. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kawano fails to disclose or suggest an inclination that places an outermost portion of a second drive shaft at a location that is one of more downstream and more upstream than the location of the first drive shaft, as recited in independent claim 18.

Kawano discloses a device having driving roller means 15 that includes a driving shaft 15A, and follower roller means 16 that includes revolving shafts 16A (see Fig. 13b;

paragraphs [0073] to [0075] of computer generated English-language translation). The Office Action asserts that the driving shaft 15A corresponds to the claimed first drive shaft, and that the revolving shafts 16A correspond to the claimed second drive shaft. However, as clearly shown in Fig. 13b, although axes of the revolving shafts 16A are angled with respect to the center of the Fig. 13b, the inclination does not place an outermost portion of either revolving shaft 16A at a location that is one of more downstream and more upstream than the location of the driving shaft 15A. Instead, the outermost portion of either revolving shaft 16A is at a location that is the same as the location of the driving shaft 15A in a paper sheet feed direction (see the left and right sides of Fig. 13b which shows the axes of the outermost portion of both revolving shafts 16A sharing the same plane as the axis of the driving shaft 15A). Thus, Kawano fails to disclose or suggest an inclination that places an outermost portion of a second drive shaft at a location that is one of more downstream and more upstream than the location of the first drive shaft, as recited in independent claim 18.

Thus, claim 18 is patentable over Kawano. Because claim 19 incorporates the features of claim 18, claim 19 also is patentable over Kawano for at least this reason, as well as for the additional features this claim recites. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6-8 and 10

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 6-8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fowler et al. (Fowler), U.S. Patent No. 3,666,262, in view of Sako et al. (Sako), U.S. Patent No. 6,073,927. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The combination of Fowler and Sako fails to disclose or suggest that an axis of a segment of a driven roller unit arranged on one side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed is aligned with an axis of a segment of a driven roller unit arranged on the other side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed, as recited in independent claim 1.

Fowler discloses a magnetic card transport having drive rollers 8 and 10 (see Figs. 3a and 3b; col. 4, lines 14-30). The Office Action asserts that the drive rollers 8 and 10 correspond to the claimed driven roller unit segments arranged on either side of a center of the width of the sheet to be fed. However, as clearly shown in Figs. 3a and 3b, the drive rollers 8 and 10 are each canted in opposite directions with respect to centerline E shown in Fig. 3a of Fowler reproduced on page 4 of the Office Action. That is, the axis of drive roller 8 (arranged on one side of centerline E) is not aligned with an axis of drive roller 10 (arranged on the other side of centerline E). Fowler teaches that the drive rollers 8 and 10 are canted in opposite directions with axes that are not aligned with each other so that drive roller 8 and drive roller 10 bias the magnetic card against the fixed guide rail 43-44 in reverse and forward directions, respectively (col. 4, lines 30-33). Further, Sako fails to overcome the deficiencies of Fowler, and is only relied on for allegedly disclosing a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a driven roller that is smaller than a coefficient of friction of an outer layer of a drive roller. Thus, the combination of Fowler and Sako fails to disclose or suggest that an axis of a segment of a driven roller unit arranged on one side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed is aligned with an axis of a segment of a driven roller unit arranged on the other side of the center of the width of the sheet to be fed, as recited in independent claim 1.

Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Fowler and Sako. Because claims 3, 6-8 and 10 incorporate the features of claim 1, these claims also are patentable over the applied references for at least this reason, as well as for the additional features these claims recite. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

IV. Rejection of Claim 9

The Office Action rejects claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Fowler in view of Sako, and further in view of Kawano. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Because claim 9 incorporates the features of claim 1, and because Kawano fails to overcome the deficiencies of Fowler and Sako, claim 9 also is patentable over the applied references for at least these reasons, as well as for the additional features claim 9 recites. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Further, claim 9 is amended to change "an axis of the driven roller" to "the axis of the driven roller". Antecedent basis for "the axis of the driven roller" is found in line 11 of claim 1.

V. Conclusion

In view of at least the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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